

AUTHORIZING THE CHARGING OF TOLLS FOR TRANSIT
OVER THE MANETTE BRIDGE IN BREMERTON, WASH.

JUNE 25, 1956.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. BLATNIK, from the Committee on Public Works, submitted the
following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 2712]

The Committee on Public Works, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2712) to authorize the charging of tolls for transit over the Manette Bridge in Bremerton, Wash., having considered the same, report favorably thereon, without amendment, and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 2712 is to authorize the Washington Toll Bridge Authority, as an agency of the State of Washington, to fix and charge tolls on the existing Manette Bridge across Port Washington Narrows at Bremerton, Wash., notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained in the act of June 14, 1926 (44 Stat. 744). Tolls would be collected on the Manette Bridge, and not more than one additional bridge hereafter to be constructed by such authority adjacent to the Manette Bridge, to provide a fund sufficient to pay the cost of the maintenance and operation of both such bridges, and provide a sinking fund sufficient to amortize the cost of reconstructing and improving the Manette Bridge and of constructing such additional bridge and the approaches thereto, including interest and financing costs, within a period of not more than 30 years after such reconstruction or construction and improvement is commenced. After amortization, both bridges would be maintained and operated free of tolls.

STATEMENT

The act of June 14, 1926, authorized the construction, maintenance, and operation of a bridge and approaches thereto, by W. E. Buell, across Port Washington Narrows within the city of Bremerton, Wash., under the provisions of the act of March 23, 1906. Section 2 provides

for acquisition of the bridge by public agencies and section 3 provides for its operation as a free bridge or further for the charging of tolls to provide for the maintenance, repair, and operation of the bridge and to provide a sinking fund to amortize the amount paid for the bridge and approaches within a period of 15 years from the date of such acquisition. After the sinking fund is provided the bridge is to be free of tolls or the tolls so adjusted as to provide only for the costs of maintenance, operation, and repair of the bridge.

The Manette Bridge was completed in 1930. At that time there were approximately 800 families living on the Manette Peninsula. Prior to completion of the bridge these people commuted to and from Bremerton by ferry. The bridge has a 2-lane roadway originally designed to carry 6,000 cars per day, but presently carrying approximately 17,000 cars per day.

The State of Washington acquired the Manette Bridge in 1938, and in 1940 it was freed of tolls. It became a part of the State highway system, being on the Federal-aid secondary system, although no Federal-aid highway funds were involved in its construction.

The city of Bremerton has a normal population of about 32,000, exclusive of 6,000 to 10,000 Navy personnel and their families, and there are an additional 30,000 people living in fringe areas outside the city limits. The city of Bremerton, particularly the Manette Peninsula area is still growing and expanding, and many of the 12,000 employees of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard reside in the East Bremerton area and use the present Manette Bridge in going to and from work.

The existing bridge creates a bottleneck and present traffic conditions on both sides of the bridge are such that excessive congestion and delay occurs during rush hours and at other times during the day. Improvement of the approaches will permit more efficient traffic use of the bridge, but an additional bridge is urgently needed to relieve present congestion and care for future anticipated traffic conditions.

The 1955 session of the Washington State Legislature enacted legislation authorizing agreements between the Department of Highways and the Washington Toll Bridge Authority concerning the reconstruction and improvement of bridges on the State highway systems; authorizing the authority to carry out such work, to construct additional bridges, and to issue revenue bonds in connection therewith; and specifically authorized construction of a toll bridge over the Port Washington Narrows and improvement of the approaches to and the imposition of tolls on the Manette Bridge.

The committee has been advised that the people of the area overwhelmingly favor placing tolls on the existing bridge to help pay for a new 4-lane toll bridge, and that a moderate toll charge will completely pay for the proposed improvements in 10 to 12 years.

The committee believes that the existing narrow two-lane bridge has become entirely inadequate to serve the present population and the needs of the people employed at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. An additional bridge appears necessary to relieve the downtown area of Bremerton of its traffic congestion, create a free flow of traffic from east to west and make the city more accessible to residents of the area north thereof; and for civil defense and rapid evacuation of the residents and Navy yard personnel in case of an attack on the area.

The committee further believes it proper to finance the new bridge and other allied improvements by tolls for use of the new bridge, and

reimposition of tolls on the Manette Bridge, and recommends enactment of this legislation.

The committee has been advised that the Bureau of the Budget and the Department of Commerce have no objection to enactment of this legislation. Comments of the Secretary of the Army on a companion bill, H. R. 7814, are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., March 2, 1956.

Hon. CHARLES A. BUCKLEY,
*Chairman, Committee on Public Works,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request for the views of the Department of the Army with respect to H. R. 7814, a bill relating to the reconstruction and improvement of an existing bridge and the construction of an adjacent new bridge by Washington Toll Bridge Authority extending across Port Washington Narrows at Bremerton, Wash., and grouping and operating said bridges, and the imposition of tolls in connection therewith.

The Department of the Army offers no objection to favorable consideration of the above-mentioned bill.

The act of June 14, 1926 (44 Stat. 744) authorized the construction, maintenance, and operation of a bridge and approaches thereto by W. E. Buell across Port Washington Narrows within the city of Bremerton, Wash. Section 2 provides for acquisition of the bridge by public agencies and section 3 provides for the charging of tolls after acquisition to provide for the maintenance, repair, and operation of the bridge and to provide a sinking fund to amortize the amount paid for the bridge and approaches within a period of 15 years from the date of such acquisition. After the sinking fund is provided the bridge is to be free of tolls or the tolls so adjusted as to provide only for the costs of maintenance, operation, and repair of the bridge.

H. R. 7814 would authorize the Washington Toll Bridge Authority as an agency of the State of Washington to reconstruct the existing Kanette Bridge and construct an adjacent new bridge. Tolls would be charged on both bridges with an amortization period of 30 years after which the bridges would be maintained free of tolls.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

WILBER M. BRUCKER,
Secretary of the Army.
